

TESTIMONY ON HB 6824 – CONCERNING FUNDING FOR REGIONAL ACTION
COUNCILS


Good day, Chairman Bye, Vice Chairman Hartley, and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am writing in strong opposition to the reductions in the Governor's proposed budget which would have a direct negative impact on Regional Action Councils (RACs). The Governor himself, in his bill, is asking for additional programs to help curtail the abuse of prescription drugs. We all know that the CDC has now classified prescription drug abuse to be at epidemic levels. The Department of Health, with support from Mental Health and Addiction Services, Consumer Protection, and Children and Families, is currently working on a program that will support the requirement of the medical community to not only register with the PMP program, but also to in fact consult the registry when prescribing medications. Additionally, the DPH program is working on a public relations campaign to bring awareness and knowledge to the general public about this very serious issue—prescription drug abuse.

Our current efforts rely heavily on how this information is disseminated throughout the State of CT. There is no question that a very important spoke in the wheel of communication are the RACs. This group has for years worked to assist municipalities in organizing programs to combat the use of alcohol and now more recently the ever-present abuse of prescription drugs. If anything were to be true, it would be that we need to increase the amount of funding at these regional levels to assist these communities that just do not have the ability or knowledge to implement programs resulting in prevention, treatment and recovery. One sobering statistic is that this past year, the number of overdose-related deaths in CT has actually surpassed the number of fatalities related to motor vehicle accidents.

This statistic alone should be enough of a wake-up call to our government to support and in fact increase the amount of attention and dollars that are focused in this area. We cannot do this alone. We need your help from Appropriations. Please support the elimination of this deep cut to programs that help everyone across the State of CT.

Sincerely,


Rudy Marconi
First Selectman
Town of Ridgefield